



Case Study | Gould Evans

SD-WAN, SIP Trunking and Microsoft Teams revolutionize architectural firm's connectivity at all levels

AT A GLANCE

gouldevans

Website: gouldevans.com

Industry: Architecture & Planning

Locations: Kansas City, MO; Lawrence, KS; New Orleans, LA; San Francisco, CA; Phoenix, AZ

Type: Privately-owned

Employees: 135

Founded: 1974

Challenges

- Connecting five geographically distributed locations across U.S. western and southern states, requiring reliable, high-capacity bandwidth for seamless interoffice communications and collaboration.
- Management of over 300 internal direct-dial phone destinations (DIDs) across five locations required reliable multi-site communications.
- Routine exchange and backup of large-scale architectural files needed high-capacity network bandwidth.
- Sudden demand for remote worker support due to COVID-19, with need to maintain client service and billable hours.
- Need for SIP integration for Microsoft Teams support for both internal and remote workforce of about 135.

AireSpring Products Utilized

- Managed SD-WAN solution utilizing VMware SD-WAN by VeloCloud™
- SIP Trunks
- Business Internet
- 4G Failover
- AireNMS WAN Network Monitoring System

CUSTOMER

Gould Evans is an architectural firm with offices in Kansas City, MO; Lawrence, KS; New Orleans, LA; San Francisco, CA and Phoenix, AZ. The firm's portfolio represents a wide variety of projects for public and private institutions, including educational, cultural, residential and workplace facilities. The firm also maintains an in-house graphic design studio located in Phoenix.

As an architectural firm, Gould Evans relies on a number of design applications including Revit, Enscape, SketchUp and Rhino, tools for which large file sizes, sharing and collaboration between distributed teams and clients are inherent. Gould Evans uses Newforma software to manage the complexities of file sharing, tracking, access logging and information exchange that can be vital to project management, which places additional demands on local storage, network traffic and backup needs. They have come to rely on Microsoft Teams as a communication and collaboration platform.

Gould Evans had two successive connectivity and communication challenges to overcome, in 2018 and then early 2020.

CHALLENGE 1

Into 2018, the company was reliant on a self-managed WAN with 3 and 6 Mbps connections to the branch offices. The headquarters site, through which all voice and communications flowed, had only 10 and 50 Mbps connections. Offsite backup and recovery was not a working option with the combination of large file sizes and modest network bandwidth. A lack of failover or redundancy for any office meant that connectivity outages could bring everyday business to a halt, and multiple providers across five states meant that issues could take hours or days to resolve.

SOLUTION 1

Gould Evans tackled their inadequate connectivity challenges by selecting AireSpring as their new network and voice provider. AireSpring installed a managed SD-WAN solution using Gartner Magic Quadrant leader VMware SD-WAN by VeloCloud and also upgraded to 1-gigabit connectivity between their five locations.

With data bandwidth increased to meet their needs, the conversion to AireSpring's managed SD-WAN dramatically improved reliability while simplifying IT management. Every link in the large web of connectivity no longer needed to be managed individually, with separate providers, and connection redundancy and failover meant communication failures were all but eliminated. 4G failover provided key offices with additional communications reliability. The high-capacity managed network enabled faster and more reliable connectivity between Gould Evans' sites and employees, frequent exchange of backup data between the Kansas City and Phoenix sites and daily backup to a cloud provider for fully offsite data safety.

Along with the SD-WAN network, Gould Evans added SIP trunking between sites to improve call reliability and voice quality between their more than 300 internal direct-dial extensions. SIP trunks also laid the groundwork for the company moving into a fully integrated implementation of Microsoft Teams.

“Since we have moved over to AireSpring being our direct-routing hosted session border controller (SBC) for Microsoft Teams, we have zero issues. Everything's been working.”

Matt Wilson, Vice President Information Technology

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Results

- Vastly improved data connectivity between five sites allows rapid exchange of large files.
- Increased data connectivity allows daily offsite and cloud backup.
- SIP network enables high-quality voice communications, and integration with Microsoft Teams empowers staff to leverage direct routing capabilities to make and receive phone calls from the Teams application for seamless collaboration.
- 4G Failover protects connectivity at key sites.
- One point of contact from a single source supplier eliminated vendor finger-pointing and increased reliability and responsiveness.
- AireNMS provides IT Manager with detailed real-time monitoring and usage information.
- Managed services accommodated rapid changes demanded by newly remote workforce.

“The level of service AireSpring was able to provide—with the SBC, in getting everything set up—was just fantastic.”

Matt Wilson

CHALLENGE 2

Going into 2020, the firm was using AireSpring SD-WAN, connectivity and SIP trunking solutions to manage connectivity and voice for 135 employees at its five sites, as well as maintain close client contact often involving sharing of large architectural drawings and planning files. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic mandated that Gould Evans pivot into a remote workforce model almost overnight. The resulting changes had the potential to place a strain on the company's ability to maintain its workflow and billable hours, and on the IT infrastructure now needing to connect to well over 100 work sites instead of five.

Gould Evans needed fast implementation of a solution to cope with the sudden switch to a remote workforce model, and the AireSpring services in place and AireSpring's team of solutions engineers were ready for the task.

SOLUTION 2

Gould Evans Vice President Information Technology Matt Wilson recognized the gravity of the situation and rushed to purchase and supply all staff with laptops, monitors and other equipment needed to enable efficient remote working, well ahead of the shortages that hampered companies slower to respond to the crisis. Gould Evans realized that they would need to expand their limited Microsoft Teams implementation into a full scale launch across the organization to support the communication and collaboration needs of a disbursed workforce, and turned to AireSpring.

A Session Border Controller was added, and because of the reliability, flexibility and capacity of the AireSpring SD-WAN and SIP trunks, the workforce changes were rapidly accommodated. Within weeks, the newly remote workers were using Microsoft Teams, with AireSpring providing the hosted SBC and direct routing, to its full capability of communication, collaboration and voice calls, with little loss in effective work and billable hours.

“We were pretty much forced to use Teams from the get-go, with the start of COVID. Skype was okay, but it was going to be really hard for all of our users to stay in that collaborative mindset. We'd already started using Teams for some projects, and we decided to jump headfirst into it.”

Matt Wilson